



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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Dear ones,

We have just experienced our first Christmas at Rafiki. It was quite like home as we had rain and cloudy weather. To not see the sun for several days was a first for us in Uganda. On Christmas Eve, all the Village went to the dining hall, and Art played the piano as we sang carols. Christmas morning our favorite local pastor and his choir came to deliver a Christmas message. Then we were able to tour each of the cottages and take pictures of the families with their Christmas trees. Later, we all ate the Christmas meal together which was a special treat. It is pure joy to be with these happy, well adjusted, and thankful children. The kitchen staff had been given the afternoon off, which meant the ROS did the serving and clean up. We were blessed to be able to serve others and spend time working with other ROS.

There have been many evergreen trees planted at the Village. They are pine trees and a kind of cedar. We found a small cedar and brought it inside, then discovered it looked like a stick, so then we cut a large branch off a large tree, which certainly was not straight or even okay as it was the least attractive tree either of us had ever seen. It was fresh for about two days and not very evergreen, "Oh, Christmas Branch."



THE TWELVE BOYS FROM NEHEMIAH WITH THEIR TREE

On December 23, each of the cottages participated in the annual Christmas tree cutting. Here is a picture of all twelve boys from Nehemiah House carrying their tree home. The other picture is of a decorated tree from cottage twelve. As you can tell they decorate with balloons and cotton balls; the

effect is colorful and fun. Like children everywhere they loved the whole process.



COTTAGE TWELVE PROUDLY STANDING IN FRONT OF THEIR DECORATED TREE

The Sunday following Christmas, we went up north to Masindi and stayed in the oldest and most charming hotel in Uganda for four days. We went on two day safaris. The first one was on a small boat up the Nile. We must have seen a thousand hippopotami. We saw many alligators, wart hogs, water buffalo, and a herd of elephants. The most exciting was when a huge elephant came to the water to drink. As we were just at water level we had to look up and up to the magnificent creature. The next day we went on a "game drive" which means to driving a car and taking pictures of game. It, too, was terrific, and we saw many species including giraffes, so many baboons that we lost count, and a lion. There were also hundreds of the deer family of animals, all just grazing together with the giraffes and elephants. It was an amazing experience, and one we would gladly repeat if you came for a visit or even better, as a MiniMissionary.

If you would like us to speak to any group that you could organize this summer, it would be a delight for us to tell about Rafiki, the programs already operating, and the plans for the future. A coffee or desert, a Sunday school class, home fellowship group are a few suggestions that might offer a setting for us. We need to know soon since our Home Office desires a tentative schedule from us this spring.

One exciting observation, since Art is responsible for music in the junior and senior secondary classes, is that many of our students and especially the Rafiki residents know the hymn of the week and all the verses. It is a thrill listening to the pre-primary students singing hymns like "Trust and Obey" from memory as we walk to our home from class several times each day. One of the spiritual outcomes (Rafiki aims) is for the children to have a deep appreciation and knowledge of the traditional hymns of our faith. They certainly achieve that goal!

Nancy had the opportunity to teach poetry in her language arts class; the goal was for the students to write a poetry review. It was particularly gratifying to her that after a week of sharing different kinds of poetry with her class, that when students finished their work, they would go to Nancy's desk and take a book of poetry back to their desk to read. It is true that the students love what the teacher loves.



THANKSGIVING WITH OUR ROS TEAMMATES

We are sending you a picture of our first Thanksgiving. It was a lovely time to be with our "new Rafiki family" and share the blessings of the day.

Our prayer requests are that:

- We continue to be healthy, mentally alert, and that we grow spiritually.
- Our students grow both academically and spiritually this year.
- God will guide and strengthen our teaching and love for each of our students.
- New children (orphans) can be added to our Village.
- The writing of the Rafiki Bible Study can be completed and distributed to the many national church schools that are waiting to use it.
- Additional ROS will be called by God to serve.
- We are able to discipline in love, as our heavenly Father does (Hebrews 12:5-6).
- Marsha and Stu Coiner will be completely healed and returned to us.

We want to be able to say with Paul, "***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith***" (2 Timothy 4:7).

To God be the glory,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Art & Nancy".

Art and Nancy

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ROS #194